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The Honorable Haley Stevens
Chairwoman
U.S. House Subcommittee on Research and Technology
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stevens,

On behalf of Ford Motor Company, I want to thank you and the Subcommittee on Research and Technology under the House Science, Space & Technology committee for exploring the use of smart technology to provide small towns and suburban communities with safe and efficient mobility solutions. I would like to provide this letter of support from Ford on your subcommittee's hearing entitled, "Smart Transportation and Mobility in Suburban Communities" to help make our cities safer, more livable, and more accessible.

At Ford, we believe in driving human progress by providing greater mobility and accessibility for all. Today, we are working with cities to bring that freedom to their residents, and we are collaborating with city leaders, businesses, transportation experts and commuters to create a smarter mobility system built on new technology and data tailored to individual cities.

Ford is working with cities to help transform people's lives in meaningful ways. This includes exploring how autonomous technology can be part of an urban transportation network and weave together different transit operations to create a better system for all. Ford is piloting tools that help cities easily visualize and understand their transportation systems and the impact of smart transport solutions. As an example, Ford collaborated with the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan to pilot our Ford City Insights Platform. This platform consists of a suite of advanced software tools that allows cities to explore and help solve a variety of mobility issues, such as parking, commuter trends, transit ridership and micromobility usage, in a dynamic way not offered before. Today, following successful tests with Ann Arbor, we are expanding the pilot of these tools to more U.S. cities, including Austin, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Detroit.

Another feature of our work with communities includes enhancing transportation safety. Safety is a top priority for many communities, especially as crashes with pedestrians increase despite increased city infrastructure and vehicles safety measures. Using the Safety Insights tool in the Ford City Insights Platform, cities can combine crash data from police reports and other sources with our connected vehicle data to help identify locations with a high likelihood of accidents. And since not every dangerous encounter or near-miss is documented by a police report, our platform helps give planners the ability to see a more complete picture of road safety.

The unique addition of connected vehicle data gives planners insight into driver behavior (aggregated and anonymized) such as where people are hitting the brakes harshly or accelerating unexpectedly — that could mark dangerous intersections or roads. Planners can use this additional insight to decide where to focus their efforts as they work to improve safety.

To really bring all this data to life for our partners, we developed the City Insights Studio — a digital tabletop model of Ann Arbor built across six LCD screens and complete with miniature, 3D-printed buildings. This interactive tabletop offers a dynamic way to visualize information that may not jump out at you from a spreadsheet, such as transit accessibility by neighborhood. It can also display analytical insights and run simulations from all the various datasets a community has. By bringing all this data into a single physical space, we can offer local officials across departments a new and holistic way of looking at how their city moves.

As we work with communities to understand their new technology and fast-paced data needs, it is important that we consider individual community needs and recognize opportunities on how this technology might be accessible to diverse municipalities. At Ford, we do this by immersing our team in a local community through our City:One Challenge. If we fix transportation problems for one person, we can identify and solve larger problems that affect the entire city to create greater access for everyone. Our unique community-centered process blends community engagement, data analytics and iterative co-creation to “bring humanity to mobility,” to assist the community in designing solutions for their neighbor, the woman on the bus, or the man they always see at the grocery store. Each City:One Challenge includes five phases that take approximately eight months to complete, culminating in a final idea that is awarded funds to implement. This process works to ensure that as mobility options are brought into a community, they reflect the needs, values and character of the community.

At Ford, we have been working hard to democratize transport for more than a century. We are now seizing the opportunity to help harmonize city transportation systems to create a more effective and efficient network that goes beyond the car. We are collaborating closely with cities to find a smarter way forward — a way that brings all stakeholders together in an easy-to-use, data-driven environment that can help make our cities safe, more livable and accessible, as well as drive new opportunities for multiple generations to come.

Congress plays an important role in helping states and municipalities fund various mobility initiatives. By experimenting and sharing best practices from these efforts, communities will continue to improve safety, traffic flow, and livability. This becomes increasingly important as more and more individuals move to metropolitan areas. Thank you for your efforts in helping to improve greater mobility access for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curt Magleby', with a stylized, sweeping underline.

Curt Magleby
Vice President, Government Affairs
Ford Motor Company